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## Blogs - 2020 - January

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PDF Date: 19 January 2021

Handwritten shorthand notes in blue ink on lined paper. The notes are dense and cover approximately 10 lines of the page. The shorthand appears to be a form of Pitman's shorthand, consisting of various strokes, curves, and symbols.

**Birthday Messages**

Greetings Mr Pitman. You don't know me but I just wanted to write you a little message on your birthday to say how much\* we appreciate your wonderful method of shorthand. By "we" I mean myself and my friends in the shorthand class at the college. We didn't know anything when we arrived on that day with just a pencil and a pad but we had a really good teacher with many years of experience in teaching. She made it all so easy, and was so patient with us and solved all our difficulties. It was quite hard going at first\* but as we knew it was going to lead to a steady job and reasonable pay, we persevered through the weeks of our college course. We were also learning typing, as at that time the two subjects went together. Once we were into our

stride, we really enjoyed our shorthand sessions, which were\* most weekdays. We would spend our break times reading the shorthand magazine together and I think you would have enjoyed watching and helping us if you had been there. Thank you so much\* for all your hard work in creating the shorthand, which is turning out to be so useful for us in our working lives. Best wishes\* and a very Happy Birthday.

\* "how much" "so much" Including the M of "much" enables the phrase to join

\* Omission phrases "at (fir)st" "which (w)ere"

\* "best wishes" Upward Ish to enable the phrase to join

A series of horizontal lines for writing, corresponding to the lines of text on the left page.







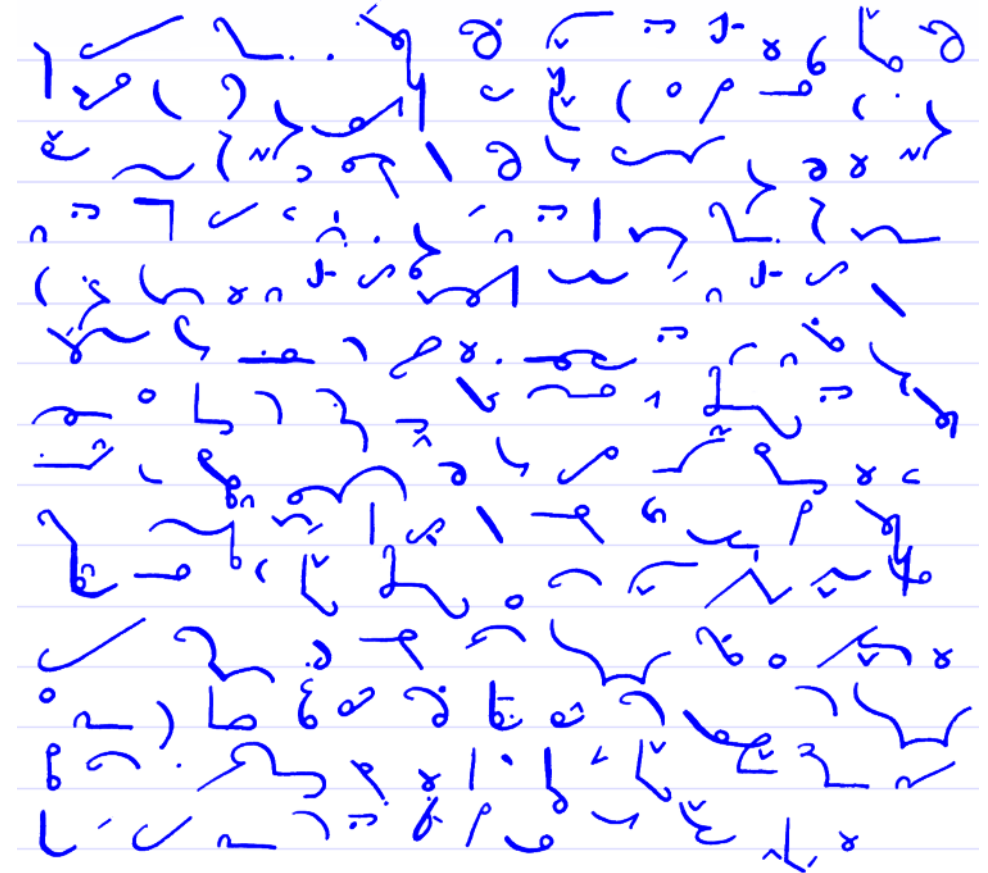


**Birthday Messages**

Dear Mr Pitman, We in our class send you our very best compliments and best wishes\* on your honoured birthday. You have provided us with a really good scientific system for writing the sounds of speech, and this has made it much easier for everyone to learn. We thought we would just have to memorise thousands of symbols, but in fact\* your precise logical methods have made it a joy to study, and it becomes more and more\* clear to us, as we go through the chapters, just how much\* thought and effort you put into it over the years. You are our hero and we hope\* you don't mind that we have put a large photo of you in our classroom, to remind us to be grateful to those\* who have preceded us, and left behind such a useful legacy that is helping us move forward in our chosen careers. Please

accept our grateful thanks and we hope you have\* a very good and pleasant\* day. Yours sincerely. (1110 words)

- \* "best wishes" Upward Ish to enable the phrase to join
- \* Omission phrases "in (f)act" "more (and) more" "we (h)ope" "we (h)ope you have"
- \* "how much" Including the M of "much" enables the phrase to join
- \* "to those" Insert the vowel in "those" and "these" when they are out of position in a phrase
- \* "pleasant" "pleasing" Helpful to insert a vowel, as these are similar

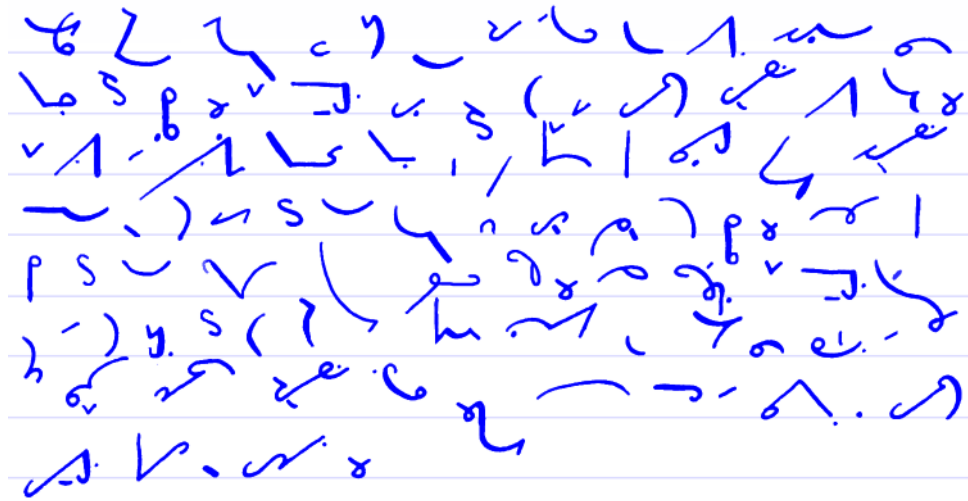


**Can't Wait**

Today we are practising the apostrophied phrases, like can't and don't. These types of phrases always have their vowel inserted, in order to\* identify them as such, because without a vowel sign many of them would simply be phrases for the normal full words. You can't get away with omitting the vowels and you can't do too much\* practising of them, to make them completely familiar. You don't want to misread anything and you don't want to be puzzling over the exact word used. The examiner can't let you pass if that mistake has taken your error count above the maximum, and the transcription\* can't be considered accurate if it substitutes\* similar words for the ones actually spoken. When producing minutes of meetings, it won't be expected that you include such apostrophied forms, because

that type of transcription\* is more like report writing, where verbatim isn't expected and more formal prose is required. As you can see, text with this sort of phrase doesn't sound very businesslike or formal, as it is more a reflection of speaking. It all depends on the type of work you are doing, and whether you can or can't adjust such things in the final\* output.

- \* Omission phrase "in ord(er to)"
- \* "too much" Includes the M stroke to be able to join the phrase, likewise "so much" "very much"
- \* "transcription" This and derivatives omit the R, to help distinguish from "describe"
- \* "substitutes" Omits the first T to obtain a more convenient outline
- \* "final" "official" Insert the first vowel in these, as they look similar



**Can't Wait**

In the months of January and February when I was young, I would often have ready and waiting some packets\* of plant seeds. I couldn't wait to plant them but the weather wasn't ready for that. I read and re-read the back of the packet\*, but each time it hadn't changed and wasn't going to say "Plant in February, you won't lose your seeds". Mostly it said, "Plant in April after the risk of frost". Most frustratingly I couldn't force the issue and so I didn't plant them, although at the end of March, if it

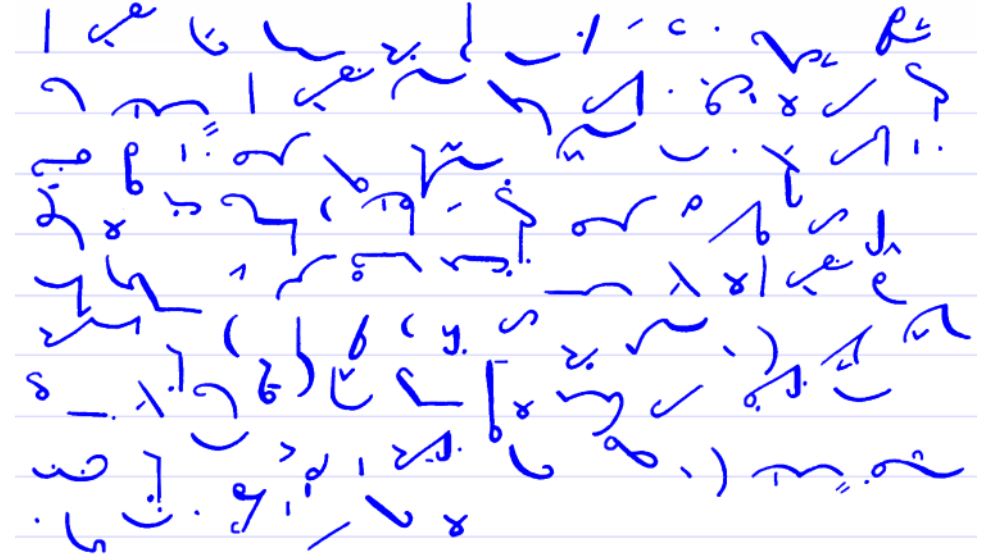
seemed sunny\* and slightly warmer, I wasn't averse to considering\* the matter again, and hoping the weather wouldn't turn too wintry.

\* "packet/s" Include the second vowel, so it does not look like "pack"

\* "sunny" "snowy" Always insert the vowels to prevent misreading

\* Omission phrase "to (con)sidering"

Handwritten practice lines on lined paper.



**Can't Wait**

It wasn't fun having to wait at that young age, and, with a brilliant suggestion from Mum, it wasn't long before we had a solution. We planted cress seeds on a small piece of towelling, lying in a puddle of water on a saucer. I can't forget that musty and planty smell, as the roots went down into the fabric and the little carpet of green

came up. It wasn't as if I wanted to eat them, it was just that I didn't want to wait too long to see real live plants coming up from all those tiny black dots. I am sure we hadn't any intention of eating any of the shoots, but I wouldn't have been surprised to see Mum consuming a few in a sandwich on our behalf.

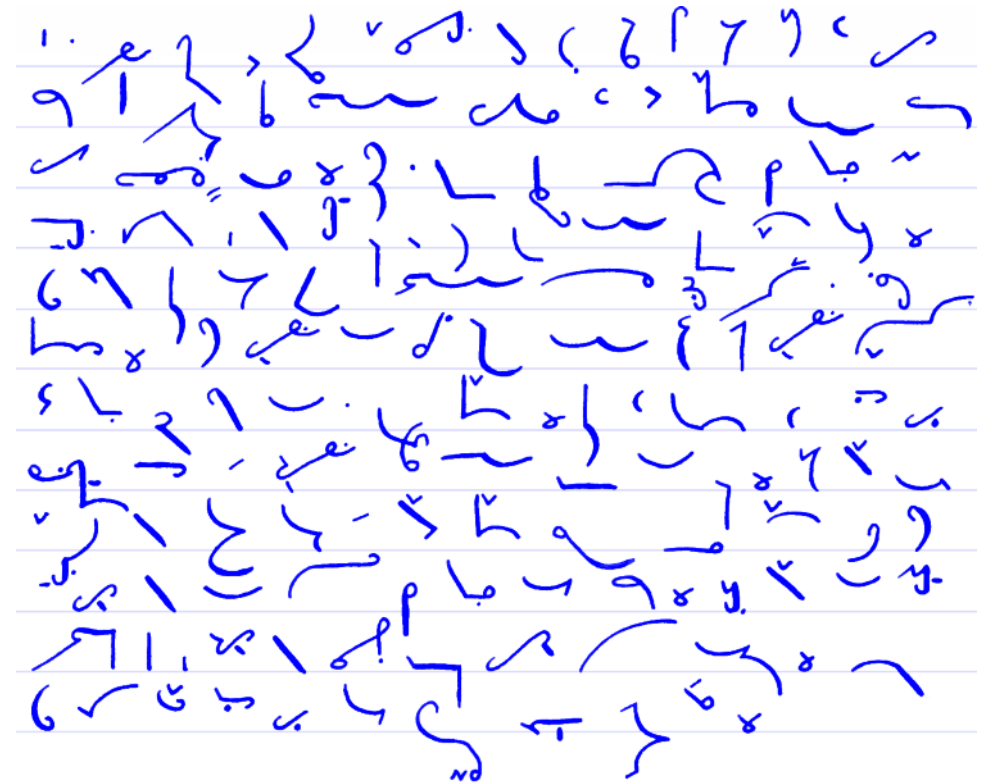
Handwritten practice lines on lined paper.



**Can't Wait**

I don't remember whose idea it was to get some beans to grow as well. It isn't difficult to get them to sprout inside a jam jar, wedged against a roll of paper, to hold them against the glass. It didn't take long for the water in the jar to be sucked\* up the paper and for the beans to swell, split open and put down a very intriguing long hairy white root. I couldn't believe my eyes the first time I saw all this and it wouldn't be long before there was another jar or two

Blank lined paper for taking notes.



**Can't Wait**

On a recent trip to the shops, I hadn't been thinking of this at all until I saw that one store had refilled its gardening shelves with all the items, having cleared away the Christmas things. There was a big display of colourful seed packets\* and I couldn't help but be drawn to it, to see if anything took my fancy. Then I remembered it was only January and gardening matters weren't really a concern at the moment\*. There wasn't any chance of doing anything with them and it wasn't likely that the packet\* would be remembered in a few months' time. It was that familiar old "Can't Wait" syndrome again, and I wasn't going

Blank lined paper for taking notes.

in the row, with beans at different stages of growth. I wouldn't say we were interested in having beans to plant out, as by the time they grew above the top of the jar, they weren't such a novelty and they began to get somewhat mouldy with the lack of ventilation.

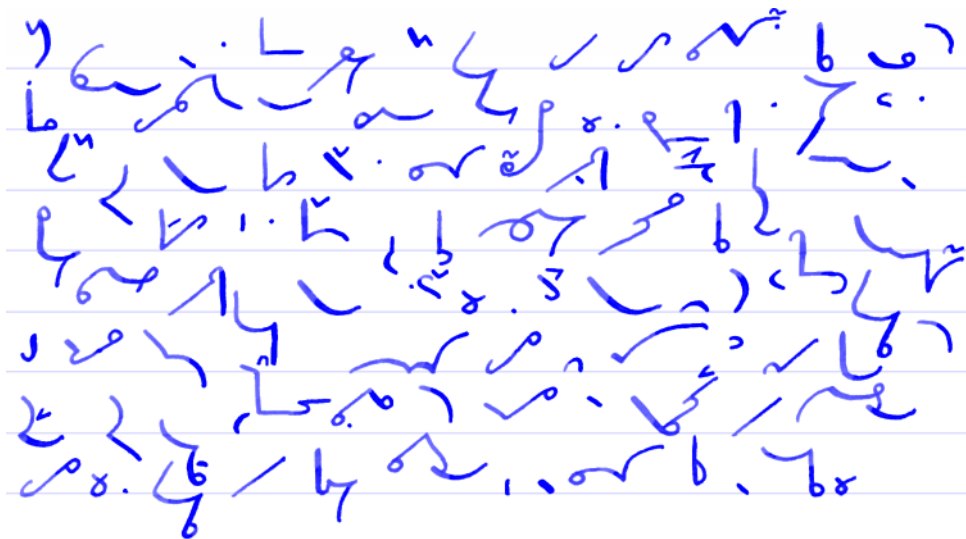
\* "sucked" Insert the vowel carefully, so it is not misread as "soaked"

to give in to it. I think by now I shouldn't be falling for that, and by the time spring comes I'm sure there won't be any lack of seed packets in the store. I didn't buy any and I don't regret it, but I won't be hesitating to get one or two\* later in the year. Maybe then I will find I can't wait for the flowers to grow and fill the pots. (787 words)

\* "packet/s" Include the second vowel, so it does not look like "pack"

\* Omission phrases "at (the) moment" "one (or) two"





**Landing On A Sixpence**

I was listening to a talk recently about changing the way one habitually does things or conducts oneself\* in certain situations\*. The speaker drew an analogy with a giant ship being turned by a small rudder and the fact that it was not going to suddenly "turn on a dime" but that it would most certainly\* reverse its direction eventually, as long as the rudder continued being applied. The point being made was that changes do not always appear to take effect\* immediately once you alter what you are doing or saying, especially if those old habits\* or patterns of behaviour are long-standing ones. The changes are definitely happening but too small at first\* to notice.

- \* "oneself" Omits the N
- \* "situations" Full Ish stroke because of the triphone, and also distinguishes it from "station"
- \* Omission phrase "mos(t) certainly" "at (fir)st"
- \* "take effect" Using F/V Hook for the F of "effect"
- \* "habits" "hobbies" Always insert the first vowel, as these are similar in outline and meaning

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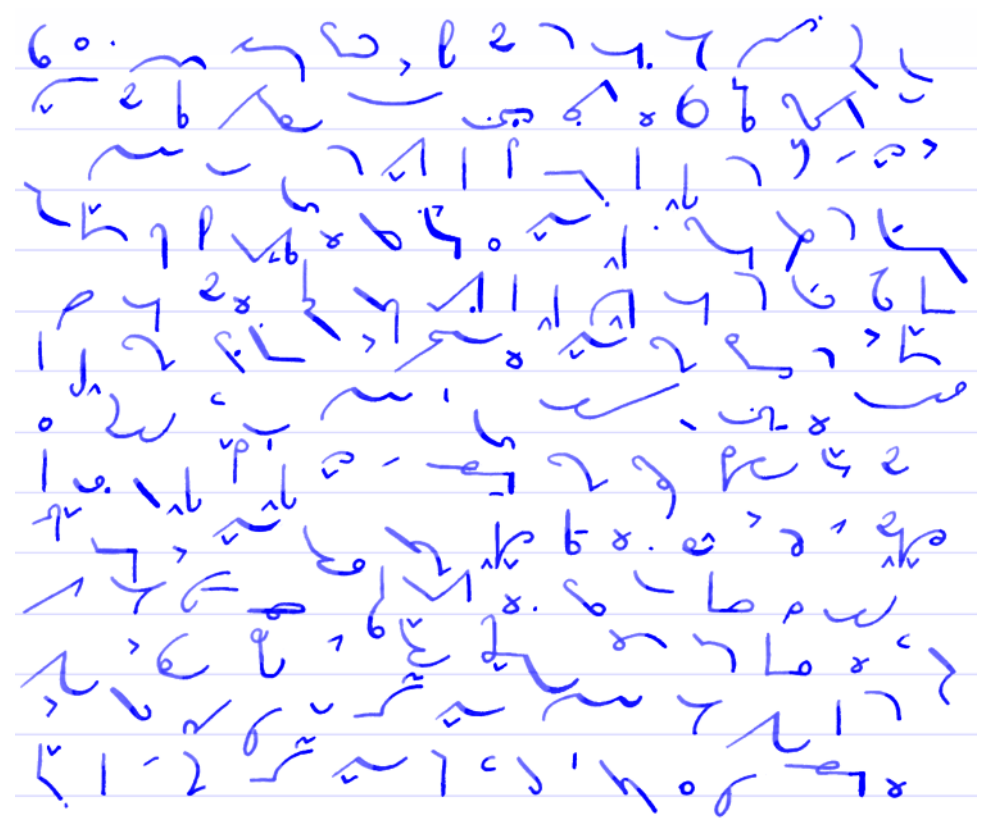
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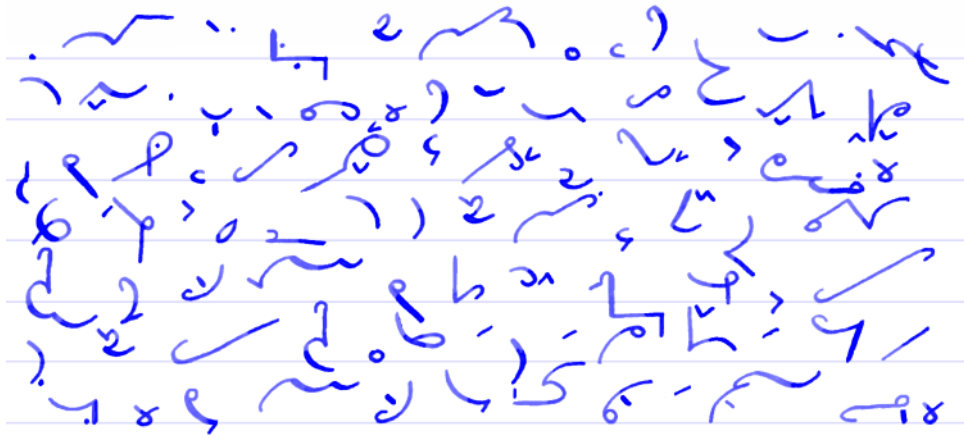


**Landing On A Sixpence**

This has an immediate and clear application to the study of shorthand, or indeed any other\* learning, especially if, like shorthand, it is replacing another ingrained habit\*. This is why it is preferable not to have longhand in view, or write it at all, keeping it out of your eyes and mind all the time during study periods. Best avoided\* is writing out a printed passage or vocab list into shorthand. It would be better to read it out loud into your phone and then take it down from the playback of the recording. Writing from the spoken word all the time is essential, with no longhand on view anywhere to intrude. In other words\* it needs to be out of sight, out of mind, and excluded from the process, as it will only fight the shorthand and try to get to the writing fingers before the outline does. The sound of the words and the shorthand outlines are the only welcome guests at

this party. The place for text is the initial reading of the lesson instruction, and the final transcribing\* of some of your takes. With both of the above, you are still not actually writing longhand, only reading it or typing it, and so the actual writing of it with pen on paper is still excluded.

- \* Omission phrase "any oth(er)"
- \* "habit" "hobby" Always insert the first vowel, as these are similar in outline and meaning
- \* "avoid" "evade" Always insert the second vowel in these and derivatives, to prevent misreading
- \* "in other words" Doubling to represent "other"
- \* "transcribing" This and derivatives omit the R, to help distinguish from "describe"

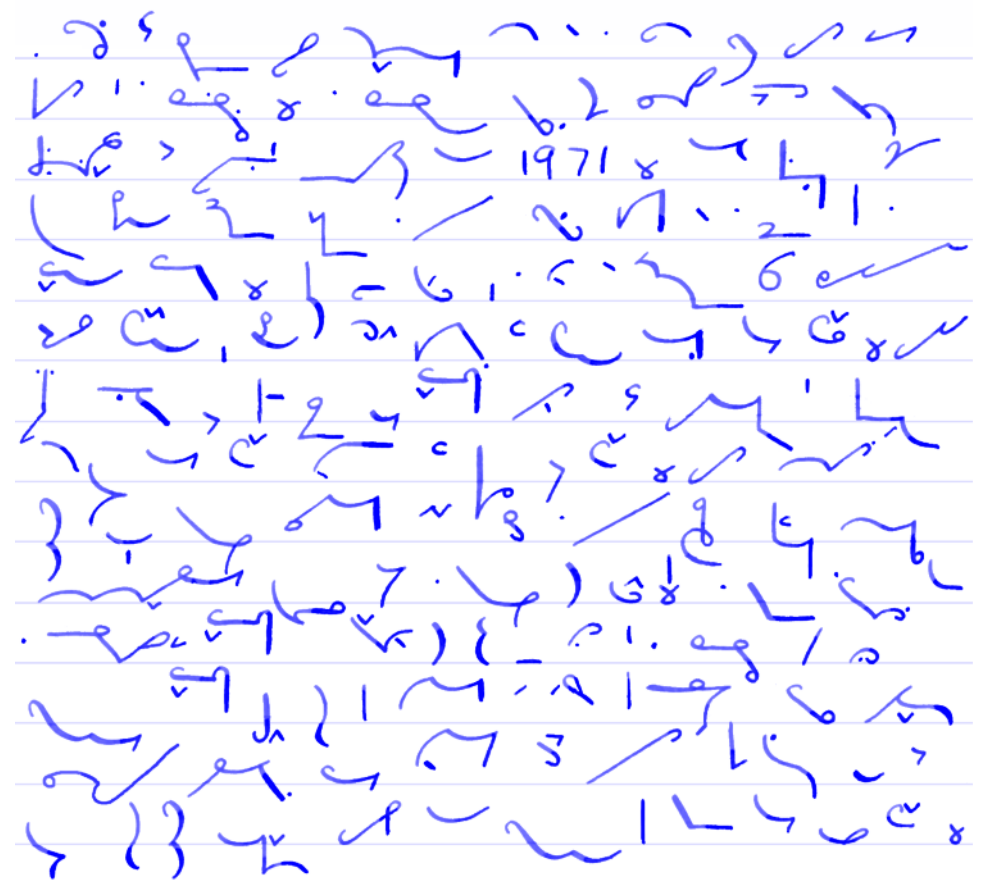


**Landing On A Sixpence**

The mark of a dedicated\* shorthand learner is when they are filling in a paper form, or writing a note to someone. Their hand now wants to write the outlines but that has to be resisted when one realises that the recipient would not appreciate all the squiggles. This is the opposite of the first week or so of shorthand learning, when the giant ship, happily travelling through the Ocean of Longhand, has to be turned around and directed instead to the

wonderful Sea of Shorthand, where travel is fast and easy, and less time and energy are needed. Save the Longhand Ocean for the occasional slow and lumbering cruise.

\* "dedicated" Insert the vowels in this, the diphthong in "educated" and the dash vowel in "deducted", as they are all otherwise identical, similarly with all their derivatives

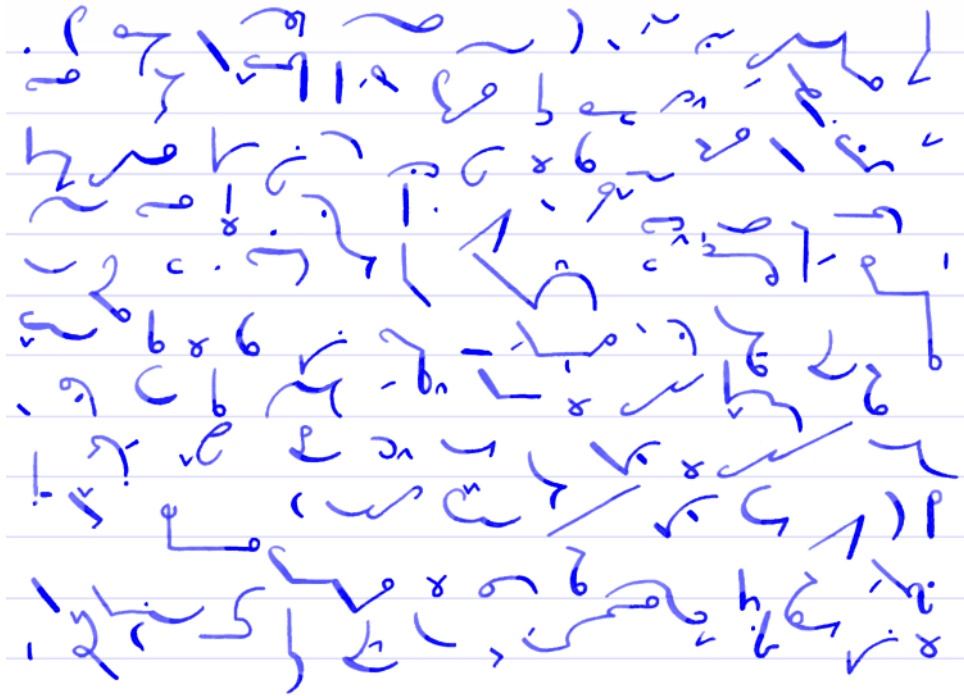


**Landing On A Sixpence**

The phrase that the speaker used reminded me of a more British one "Turn on a sixpence". A sixpenny piece was the smallest coin, before decimalisation of the UK currency in 1971. In that decade, shortly after starting work, I took a rather brave holiday of a week at a gliding club. It was great fun, but a lot of hard work as well, as we were not always flying, but standing around helping with everything needed for the flights. We would attach the cable to the tow hook under the glider, run with the wingtip on take-off\*, or fill in the flight log with details of each flight. One morning there was no pencil handy and I

spent a rather stressful twenty minutes memorising the figures until a pencil was found! A big compliment for an experienced glider pilot was that they could "land on a sixpence" which meant bringing the glider down so that it landed and stopped at exactly the place required, somewhere reasonably near the launch point, rather than at the far end of the field, so that there was no time wasted in bringing it back for the next flight.

\* "take-off" Full strokes for a clearer outline, whereas phrases like "to take off, carry off" would use the F/V hook

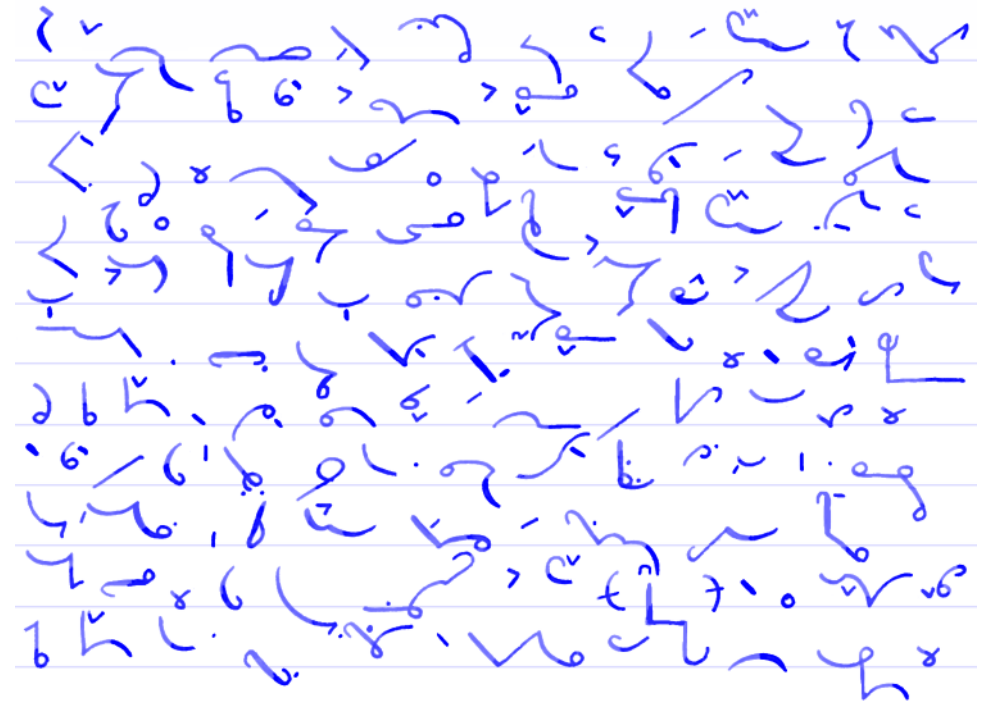


**Landing On A Sixpence**

The other skill to be mastered, amongst many, was to not let the wingtips touch the grass until the glider had stopped, otherwise it would skew round and possibly damage the wings, tail wheel or main wheel. This could not always be blamed on the long grass! The airfield had a ridge of high ground next to it, covered in shrubs, with a grassy top popular with walkers\*, and spectators on gliding days. This hill produced good up-currents of air for those wishing to soar along its length and back. We would admire all this to-ing and fro-ing

whilst standing around in the field below. We were informed by the instructors that anyone flying rather too low along the ridge was said to be "picking blackberries". Some of this may have been due to losing the up-draught but I suspect that occasionally it was showing off to the onlookers on the edge of the hill.

\* "walkers" Adds an Ar stroke to "walk", to show it is a derivative. A word like "wicker" would have Way + Kr stroke.



**Landing On A Sixpence**

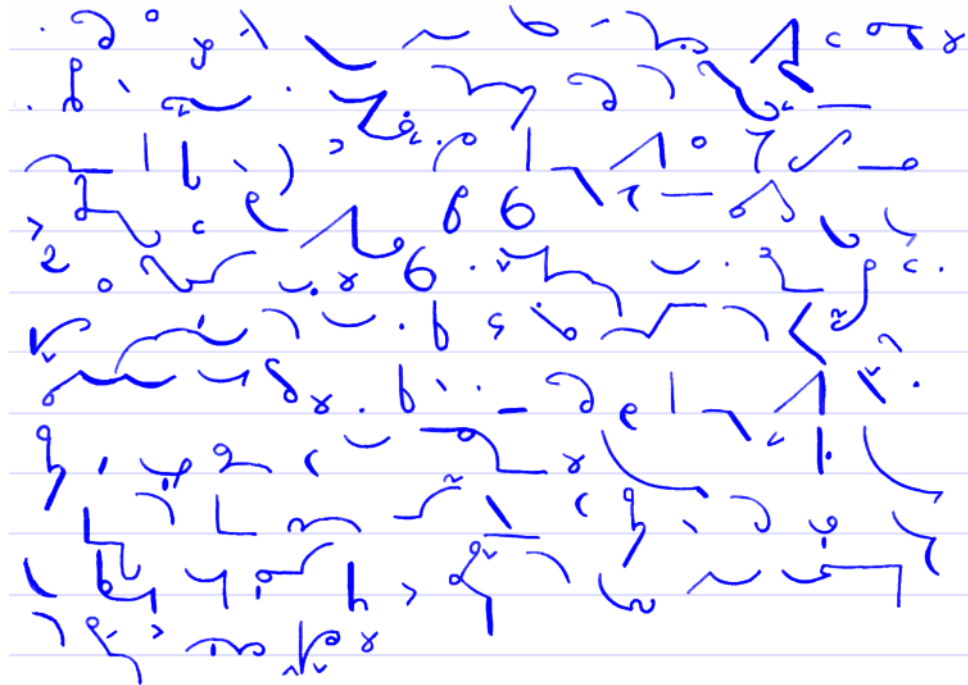
Although I may have mixed up the metaphors here, with ships and flying, I think I prefer the flight analogy, with its thoughts of the freedom of the skies rather than pushing through cold choppy seas. Maybe the answer is to start off with the slow and heavy ship and then, as speed and skill increase, transfer to the glider, flying aloft with no noisy engine, no smell of fuel, and only the sound of the rushing wind over the canopy, the green fields below and blue sky above. Too soon the instructor says it is time to lose some height and make our turn in to land. All thoughts are then on positioning ourselves

for a smooth shallow descent, landing not on a sixpence for the novice, but just avoiding\* bumps and premature wing drops onto the grass. Then, after the exhilaration of the flight (dictation), all is entirely silent and it is time for a brief appraisal of performance, in order to\* improve next time. (961 words)

\* "avoid" "evade" Always insert the second vowel in these and derivatives, to prevent misreading

\* Omission phrase "in ord(er to)"





**Distinguishing Phrases 1**

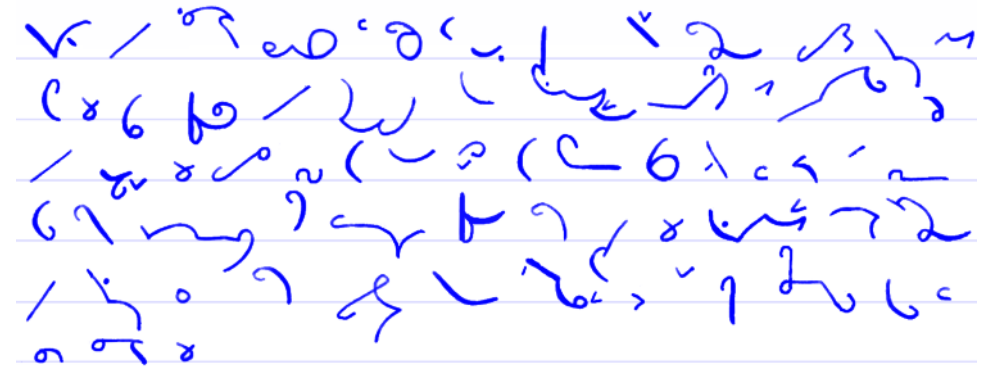
A phrase has to stand up to being\* written fast and remain readable when scribbled. The satisfaction of creating an ingenious "armchair" phrase or abbreviation can make it difficult to see what else it could be read as, until one comes to the transcription\* when several readings suggest themselves, and that can happen even if the shorthand is perfectly neat. This is a nightmare, in a work situation with a deadline looming, or in a test with the pass mark or job opportunity hanging in the balance. The test of a good phrase is that it could be read by a stranger who knows the system,

without any guesswork. After all, on the day after the dictation or take, you may actually become that stranger to your own notes, if they have descended into scrawl due to the high speed, or if you have written incorrect or spur-of-the-moment outlines.

\* "to being" Through line, as it is derived from the short form phrase "to be"

\* "transcription" Omits the R, so that "transcribe" and derivatives are distinguished from "describe"

Blank lined area for writing notes or answers.



**Distinguishing Phrases 1**

Below are sample sentences with phrases that need differentiating, by phrasing one of the pair and not the other. These distinctions are essential for accuracy, and the relevant words are underlined>. Once you have them in mind, they flag themselves up when heard and you can then remember to make sure they are clearly distinguished from each other.

Varying the method of phrasing each pair is very useful, being obvious to the eye during transcription\*, even when somewhat scribbled.

\* "transcription" Omits the R, so that "transcribe" and derivatives are distinguished from "describe"

Blank lined area for writing notes or answers.



**Distinguishing Phrases 1**

I know that there is a problem and I note that a solution has been found.

We know that you are busy and we note that your work times have been changed.

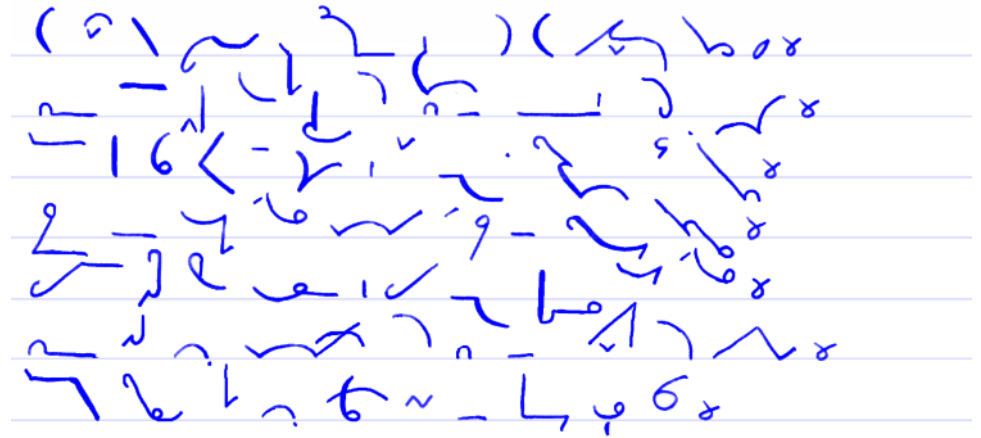
I know they will be late arriving and I note that Mr Smith will not be coming.

We know that they have finished the work and we note that the invoice has been paid.

We may have to do this again and we might have to ask for help.

I may be able to do this job although I might be able to get some assistance.

He may have learned those facts but then he might have forgotten some of it.



**Distinguishing Phrases 1**

They might be willing to do the work but they may say they require payment first.

You can go out for dinner or you could cook your own meal.

I can do this job quite easily but I could have a problem with the computer.

He can come into the office tomorrow and he could bring the papers.

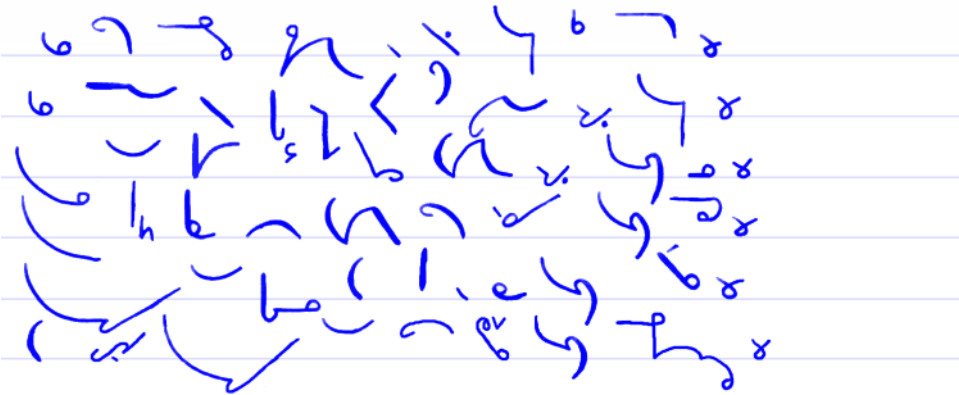
We can train the staff next week\* but we could have difficulties in the office.

You can attend the meeting tomorrow morning or you could write your report.

I can be present at the meeting this morning and I could take the notes as well.

\* Omission phrase "ne(k)s(t w)eek"





**Distinguishing Phrases 1**

If it is very expensive, he will have to pay for it on his card.

If it is going to be difficult to do the job, they are willing to wait for it.

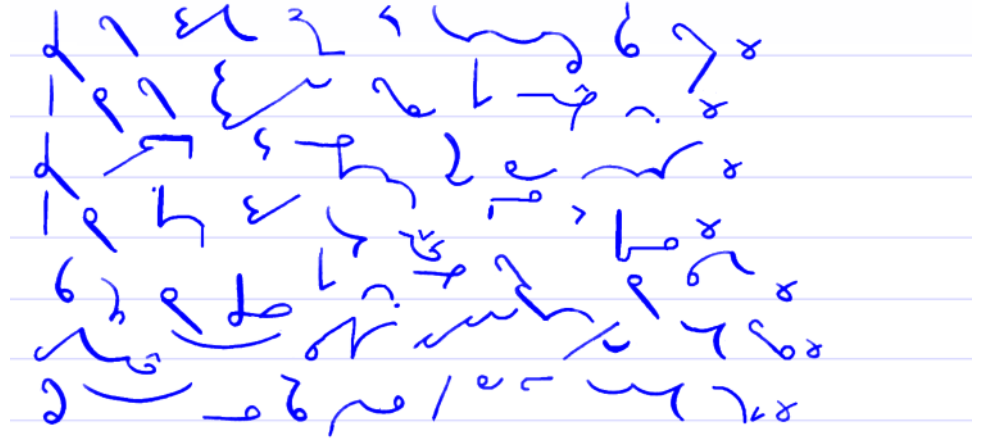
If there is any delay with the payment, they will have to wait for their goods.

If their attitude does not improve, they will be very sorry for their actions.

If there were any difficulties, they had to send for their boss.

They wondered if there were any more supplies for their customers.

Horizontal lines for writing practice.



**Distinguishing Phrases 1**

It is to be remembered that we have worked hard for many years on this project.

It has to be remembered that they were not present at the council meeting.

It is to be regretted that the customer was not seen immediately.

It has to be admitted that we failed to find the cause of the difficulties.

This issue is to be discussed at the meeting, because the problem has to be solved.

We have found another hotel and we would not recommend any other\* place.

There is another case of this illness which has not occurred in any other\* area.

(1201 words)

\* Omission phrases "any oth(er)" "in any oth(er)"

Horizontal lines for writing practice.